ABC NEWS -STS-6 LANDING (4-9-1983)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2DanX0RUQs (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2DanX0RUQs)

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From April 9th, 1983 ABC NEWS Coverage of the landing of STS-6, The first flight of the Space Shuttle Challenger at Edwards Air-Force Base in California.

- Landed at 10:53:42 A.M PST/1:53:42 P.M. PST

  Commander: Paul J. Weitz
  Pilot: Karol J. Bobko
  Mission Specialist 1: Story Musgrave
  Mission Specialist 2:Donald H. Peterson

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we interrupt our regular program schedule to bring you the following special report from abc news a clear day in california ground support television cameras and chase planes ready to welcome america's latest space shuttle as it returns from its new challenge in space from edwards air force base abc news correspondent lynn scherr well it is a fair day and a beautiful day and as you will see in just a few moments it is also an extremely windy day here at edwards air force base in california but luckily not too windy to bring home challenger good afternoon i'm lynn sherry here at edwards air force base challenger will be coming home for the first time in five days and of course it will be her first time back here since it left year july 4th challenger at this very moment has just passed over the island of hawaii it's more than 50 miles high it's traveling well over 10 000 miles an hour the astronauts are not in voice communication at this moment because they're in a kind of a blackout they re-entered the earth's atmosphere about 10 minutes ago and the terrible heat of re-entry created a blanket around the spacecraft that radio signals cannot easily penetrate but we should be hearing from them within approximately eight minutes as you can see and in just over 20 minutes they will be touching down right here lots of folks on hand to watch them right here in the desert of course we will also be able to see them with the naked eye but before that we'll get some television pictures from some extraordinary cameras mounted by nasa on some high peaks on the northern coast of california as i say in about um eight minutes we'll get those first television pictures and then after that we'll see them with the naked eye just as they pass overhead and land here and with me here today in the desert a gentleman who has landed all five of the shuttles so far the apollo 17 commander gene cernan gene this feels like a little windy for a landing lin don't i wish i had landed all five other

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wish i had landed all five other shuttles it is a typical and beautiful day and of course as you said a very windy day the most important thing though is john young has been making those practice runs with the shuttle training aircraft and he said there is no turbulence even though the wind is very gusty now that is very important to him gina i wonder if you could show us some of the things that challenger is doing right now what is paul white's the commander doing with the ship at this moment well paul actually uh is uh coming now through the entering the the the atmosphere and a molecule is a small amount of molecules we have a graphic here uh the way the aircraft will actually the shuttle an aircraft i call it because that's what it will become is going to make its turn to the final landing here at edwards the thing that's happening right now of course is he is entering the atmosphere the shuttle is beginning to look more like an airplane than it is a spacecraft and he is maneuvering the aircraft banking left and right to fly the airplane to a target point here at edwards he can actually control how far downrange and how far across range north and south he flies as he lands as he points aircraft towards edwards and even though we are not in radio communication uh obviously he is carrying out all those maneuvers and and they are being monitored by the on-board systems well i on board he's he's really all by himself of course four of them are all by themselves the ground really gets no data until they come out of blackout uh it'll be very shortly here okay well we are probably around seven minutes away from the end of blackout and then after that we are something less than 20 minutes until touchdown and we will be here at edwards air force base to bring them in and bring you the pictures our coverage of space shuttle challenger's landing will continue in a moment [Music] live coverage of america's sixth space shuttle landing is brought to you by m m's chocolate candies this is lynn shearer at edwards air force base in california where many thousands of people are standing by waiting for challenger to return home should be just a few more minutes a little bit under four minutes until they exit blackout but you should know that

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exit blackout but you should know that mission control has told us a little bit of data did come in over hawaii all systems are good we should be hearing from them very shortly this morning the crew was awakened at about 6 a.m eastern time to the strains of the penn state football fight song that's called the ode to the lions that's cause paul white's the commander is a 1954 graduate of penn state let's hear it [Music] from the great atlantic ocean to the whites the big shore from syracuse to army [Music] are the ones that we love [Music] every player [Music] well that's not a bad way to wake up gene uh on come home day uh anyways a good day to wake up uh and i imagine all the penn state fans are pretty happy about that too okay yeah one other thing paul white said when they closed the payload bay doors before they re-entered his comment was everything is all zipped up obviously everything working just wonderfully that must be good news to the folks at mission control in houston who are watching their consoles and to our science editor jules bergman jules how does it feel over there lynn tempered elation is the mood in mission control no one expected challenger to do its job quite so well on its very first flight but it did even the tdrs communications satellite which gave mission control

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satellite which gave mission control moments of worry if not grief uh is now expected to be pulled out of the hat so this flight this first flight of the challenger is all good with us is commander michael coats who will be pilot on the 12th shuttle flight mike what stands out to you most about this flight well i think all of us here in houston have been very impressed and of course very pleased with the performance of the challenger on his first flight there's been remarkable absence of malfunctions on this flight much as there was with the columbia on her first flight and personally i hope the first flight of discovery a year from now that i'm going to fly is just as lucky as this one was good mike uh any anxious moments for you on this flight well i think all of us were a little bit uh antsy if you were during the launch with all the engine problems that delayed the first launch for two and a half months so we were we were a little bit nervous uh to make sure we could make it all the way to orbit and we're extremely pleased when it finally got there let's go to mission control now mike to see if we can hear them coming out of blackout [Music] well it'll be about just under a minute i believe until they come out of blackout this is always a very critical important time there we are 36 seconds the best estimate we have now this means we will not only have voice communications and data but we do hope to get some television from that long range camera lin there's a camera right on top of uh santa ines mountain on the coast of northern california that's a tall peak nasa's got a camera up there with radar it will lock right into the shuttle and we will then have continuous tracking of the shuttle as with that picture live picture as it comes in we will have them back here in about 13 minutes from now and we should have them overhead in about nine minutes actually we should begin to see them uh again as they approach the overhead point it is a very clear sky too we should see them as soon as they come into range western test range stations at

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western test range stations at vandenberg picked up challenger this is always great word to hear from nasa lynn we've just gotten word that the western test range of the air force is seeing the challenger on its radar from vandenberg air force base for mission control we're on track and the energy that is the velocity descent rate etc for the challenger all nominal all nominal that means things are good 509 nautical miles to touchdown chase houston stand by for mach 12. mach 12 that's 12 times the speed of sound if you can imagine that and they're still at over almost 200 feet 200 000 feet above the surface of the earth well we will be seeing pictures of the space shuttle challenger returning to earth for the first time in five days in just a few moments and our coverage of the space shuttle challenger will continue in a moment [Music] this is a view of one of the chase planes out hunting around for the challenger the chase plane acting as kind of an escort we'll bring the ship in as soon as it's discovered challenger right now is about to cross over the california coast it must be about two minutes away there has been signal acquired through the buckhorn tracking station that's in california when she crosses over the coast which will be as you say in less than two minutes an update on the surface winds holding fairly steady at 210 degrees at 22 knots 22 knot head wind four knots on the left side altimeter is the same i gave you before that's that's no danger right gene that kind of headroom oh they're just confirming the winds that they had uh told them earlier about this morning they're crossing over over uh santa barbara this time but they're still three over three thousand miles an hour and they're only 151 miles away

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taken means they are getting active data here now from edwards air force base 5800 feet per second range 170. within half a minute they will cross over the california coast and they're still well over 100 000 feet high so you can see how quickly they slow down in the atmosphere remember they are still a glider we tend to forget that sometimes because of the speed and the altitude at which it flies i'm just laughing at these people they've got a little ways before they're going to actually see challenger [Music] this is this is as i say a glider without any engine so you can see from 40 miles high to 10 miles in just a very short period of time across the ground snap out message disregard that is really steep gene i guess uh they don't think of it as being so stupid it's that old energy management they can they can they convert their altitude and air speed uh so that they end up at the right place at the right time it's a it's a phenomenal thing to be able to do and yet we've done it so many times that we again begin here to take it for granted unfortunately it is absolutely a spectacular day to watch challenger come home i could imagine it's a bit hazy here but no clouds almost no clouds from the ground and as soon as it uh gets in the vicinity you watch people are going to be jumping up and down convoy at edwards ready to roll range now 110 nautical miles altitude 107 000 feet i can expect it'll take about four minutes for them to get from that 110 miles to a point overhead to 4 000 feet per second and gene they will be doing that big circle over the airfield which slows them down and brings them into the right alignment is the best way to describe it lynn is a teardrop they'll come overhead and do a big wide wide turn and uh that's to keep them within range of the field in case something should happen gusts to win they still have they're still close enough to get down quickly and again they will be landing on the concrete strip at edwards that's

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on the concrete strip at edwards that's exactly where the last flight of columbia landed uh that because the uh the the dry lake bed isn't quite so dry it's just a little too soggy a little too deep for them to land there you know they wanted to bring a challenger in for the first time on the dry lake bed since it is the maiden landing i guess there's really no concern though about landing on the concrete strip challenger houston take care of data to gnc only we can see here that what they're predicting is uh several thousands of people that came out this saturday afternoon they've been camping thousand feet altitude three thousand feet per second 72 nautical miles range that's still 2 000 miles per hour and they're only 72 miles away from edwards here again we can expect them overhead in about a minute and a half or excuse me about two and a half minutes and lynn we can look forward to that there's a view from one of the chase planes that's a pilot of the chase plane going after colombia going after challenger excuse me to bring it in obviously the camera on the back of the plane now remember the chase planes can only get up to about 40 or 45 000 feet and the challenger is still going to when it passes overhead is going to be well over 50 000 feet there are fewer chase planes flying than there have been in the past gene i believe there's only one up today 100 feet per second 52 nautical miles 52 nautical miles and they're still about 1400 miles per hour in their traveling speed so they're going to slow down pretty quickly sonic boom should uh curl in i expect them overhead uh just in another minute and a half and we're gonna get that double boom i'm actually looking for the contrails now i i think everybody's got their eyes peered westward hoping to see the clips of the challenger reflected in the sunlight the cameras california there is a small

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the cameras california there is a small white spot in the middle of your monitor and that should be challenger if you look very closely this is a nasa tracking camera that has picked it up already [Applause] you know it's always exciting to get that first glimpse outer space is still a little bit mysterious to most of us that camera is located in northern california it's a long range camera we ought to be able to see the contrails of the chase plane pretty soon now that's our first real identification to be able to then from there see the the challenger itself there it is range 30 nautical miles 60 000 feet altitude [Applause] velocity 1250 feet per second one of the reasons that we can now see the challenger uh on that camera of course one of the reasons for this uh this long range video is to document uh this part of the entry that we can see from the ground it's significantly important to the to the control and the and the further use of the challenger well people have started we have the chase plan there it is there's the contrails of the chase plane right overhead us we can see it it's not quite on your screen there is challenger [Applause] and it can be seen with a naked eye from edwards air force base we might remind you that the shuttle is returning as a glider it has no engine power to help it out we've been waiting for it right you copy that you're right on your energy this flight is everything looks good here right better looks the same down here pj velocity down less than a thousand feet per second their ship this in control challenger houston bow request manual open on landing gear iso valve number two right on cue hello how are you today

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right on cue hello how are you today charlie thank you sir the sonic boom got a big cheer here this flight has been right down the pike in aviators talk uh since it began and uh this is old peterson he's in his left-hand turn now mort coming around the heading alignment circle he'll play it a little bit closer to the runway because of these wind conditions he's moved his aim point in about a thousand feet closer to the runway to compensate for the a little stronger wind than normal these are taken from the chase plane t-38 25 000 feet altitude the shuttle will be landing at 224 and a half miles per hour almost twice as fast as most commercial liners do pitch [Music] totally controlling aircraft uh manually uh and flying it where he wants it to go we're getting a perfect shot of it from here in the the visual shot the people here are ecstatic and we see bombing lake edwards being his son to always here sarah probably a lot of sailboats out there today they were commenting there about all the water that paul white's can see that's uh surroundings we mentioned earlier it's like landing on a clip on a carrier 2-2-0 right down the runway at 18 knots you still [Applause] [Music] [Applause] what a pretty picture she is you know this this time they've painted challenger's name uh on the rear of the plane not confuse it with colombia seven miles to touchdown and paul weitz is still flying it uh manually at this point in time he's got an option going in the automatic motor

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an option going in the automatic motor if he's so desired but he is still holding on up manually 10 000 feet above the lake bed [Applause] there look at that wonderful shot right from in front coming right down adam [Applause] that is a 189 904 pound lighter an artillery shell with wings now you can see the 19 degree glide slope with the horizon in the background you get a good idea of the attitude of the airplane [Music] about 45 seconds from touchdown [Music] okay i'll round out of this 19 degree glide slope onto a one and a half and at four about 300 miles an hour yet uh here comes the landing gear and plenty of time absolutely parallel with the ground he's headed it right into the wind keep it coming on down paul it's about ready for touchdown look for the dust what a sight touchdowner what a roar from the crowd lynn [Applause] perfect landing there it goes challenger is back home and what a sign the unofficial touchdown time at uh five days zero hours 23 minutes 42 seconds i think they were a few seconds off but but we'll accept that at this point of course they took off eight hundredths of a second late i believe too so all that weight in fixing the engines uh sure pays off in the end doesn't it now we have to wait to see how long it will be before they come out of the spacecraft now that they've actually

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spacecraft now that they've actually brought it home got it down safely unfortunately i think they'd like to uh to get out quickly and kick the tire and uh and sort of exuberate the final test uh that was conducted here was a breaking test that we couldn't see it too well from here but paul weitz was to apply maximum braking for a short period of time to see the response of the braking system because you know next time we hope we see challenger come back to the kennedy space center on a much shorter runway with alligators in the water here's a replay of the landing procedures and saving this is a head-on view just before uh it touched down right after the wheels came out and another orbiter joins the fleet of active spacecraft in the sts system challenger is no longer a rookie absolutely and there's the proud announcement from nasa another orbiter joins the fleet this of course is what nasa's been waiting for the chance to say that it really does have at least the beginnings of a fleet two orbiters now a third on its way uh out of the assembly line about a year from now we should be seeing this discovery and another view these are all so pretty we could just keep on looking at them and see the gear come down there's the gear gear comes down and they put that gear down manually when they decide to do it and again it's at a point in the energy curve that they do this rjd logic by mistake there was either a l15 an r1 or else it was the one next to it their rjdf-1a what you're listening to is the live uh i was going to say air-to-ground but it's ground to ground now it's the pilot in mission control talking to one another although this is a replay you're right on it lin ground the ground they are back home day five zero hours 24 minutes 32 seconds that's no problem you can press on and we do have a fleet of operational shuttle this one seemed now we're back to the live shot there is challenger sitting on that concrete strip as you recall um it was just last july 4th when columbia

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4th when columbia landed on that concrete strip the president uh was out there with a great welcoming ceremony and that's when challenger first flew back to the cape to get processed for this mission took a lot longer than anybody expected particularly with that two and a half month delay because of the engines but boy challenger certainly has proven it is part of the fleet gene cernan i thank you for bringing this one home safely too lynn it was uh a privilege and uh certainly a lot of fun doing so thank you and thank you it's nice to have challenger back and we are looking forward to the next event of the space shuttle program that should happen sometime in june when sts-7 goes up and that will be the first american woman sally ride to fly as an astronaut for jules bergman in houston for michael coats an astronaut who helped us out for gene cernan and myself here at edwards air force base thank you all very much we'll have more on the shuttle including comments from the astronauts when they come out of the orbiter later this evening on the abc news weekend report

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